

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4951

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

UNCLAS BANGKOK 11173

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS PFOR,TH ID, SN

SUBJECT: THANOM ON HIS REASONS FOR POSTPONING VISITS TO
INDONESIA AND SINGAPORE

1. PRIME MINISTER THANOM KITTIKACHORN HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE
JULY 18. EXCERPTS FROM HIS COMMENTS AND THE REASONS FOR POST-
PONING HIS VISIT TO INDONESIA AND SINGAPORE FOLLOW:

2. QUOTE: STUDY OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SITUATION IN NEIGHBORING
COUNTRIES DURING THE PAST FEW DAYS HAS MADE ME FEEL GRAVE
CONCERN. FOR INSTANCE, EVEN AFTER THE SIGNING OF A CEASEFIRE
AGREEMENT IN VIETNAM. NORTH VIETNAM HAS SENT GROUND FORCES TO
THE STRENGTH OF 60,000 MEN. ABOUT 300 HEAVY CANNON -ABOUT 300
TANKS, AND ABOUT 150 ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS INTO SOUTH
VIETNAM. THIS IS WHY I FEAR THAT FIGHTING ON A LARGE SCALE AND USING
GREAT MILITARY STRENGTH MIGHT BREAK OUT BETWEEN NORTH VIETNAM
AND SOUTH VIETNAM VERY SOON. THAT IS THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM AND
SHOULD FIGHTING BREAK OUT THERE AGAIN WE WOULD SUFFER REPER-
CUSSION ALSO.

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2. IN THE KINGDOM OF LAOS, IT LOOKED AT FIRST AS IF AGREEMENT

WOULD BE REACHED IN NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE LAO GOVERNMENT AND THE PATHET LAO FACTION, BUT THERE HAVE BEEN INDICATIONS RECENTLY SHOWING THAT TALKS ARE NOT VERY SMOOTH. FOR INSTANCE, IN NEGOTIATIONS ON THE FORMING OF A CABINET THERE IS HEATED ARGUMENT OVER WHICH SIDE SHOULD HAVE WHICH MINISTRY. FUTHERMORE, NO AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED ON THE FIXING OF AREAS TO BE RULED OVER BY THE LAO GOVERNMENT AND BY THE PATHET LAO FACTION. THE LATTER HAS ALSO PROPOSED FOR UNITS OF ITS MILITARY FORCES TO BE STATIONED IN VIENTIANE AND IN LUANG PRABANG, AS YOU ASKED JUST NOW, AND THE LAO GOVERNMENT HAS TOTALLY REJECTED THAT PROPOSAL, SAYING THAT IT CAN STATION POLICE UNITS THERE ONLY. IT SEEMS TO BE BECOMING INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT FOR AGREEMENT TO BE REACHED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS THAT ARE BEING HELD... FURTHERMORE, THERE SEEM TO BE GREATLY INCREASED MOVEMENTS OF THE COMMUNISTS, BOTH VIETMINH AND PATHET LAO, IN THE DIRECTION OF THE LAOS BORDER WITH THAILAND, ESPECIALLY IN AREAS AT THE BEND OF THE MEKONG RIVER AND OPPOSITE OUR PROVINCE OF CHIANG RAI, AND IN SAYABOURY WHICH ADJOINS OUR PROVINCE OF NAN. IN SOUTH LAOS, THERE IS GREATLY INCREASED COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN THE CHAMPASSAK AREA, WHICH ADJOINS OUR PROVINCE OF UBON AND WHERE THE MEKONG RIVER NO LONGER FORMS THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN THAILAND AND LAOS.

3. TURNING TO THE SITUATION IN CAMBODIA, I UNDERSTAND THAT NEGOTIATIONS MIGHT BE HELD IN THE FUTURE BETWEEN THE CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT AND RED CAMBODIANS. SOME GROUPS OF RED CAMBODIANS WHICH SUPPORT PRINCE SIHANOUK, WHO IS SUPPORTED BY RED CHINA, WILL TAKE PART IN NEGOTIATIONS. SHOULD NO AGREEMENT BE REACHED THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS, I FEAR THAT THE FIGHTING IN THAT COUNTRY WOULD BECOME INCREASINGLY VIOLENT. THE COMMUNISTS ARE GETTING STEADILY NEARER TO PHNOM PENH AND IT IS IN STEADILY INCREASING DANGER. IN ADDITION, THE COMMUNISTS HAVE CUT OFF ROUTES LINKING PHNOM PENH WITH OTHER BIG TOWNS... SHOULD THEY BE ABLE TO SEIZE THOSE ROUTES AS PLANNED, IT WOULD BE A DANGER TO THAILAND. UNQTE.

4. THANOM CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT HE WOULD VISIT INDONESIA AND SINGAPORE SOME TIME IN THE FUTURE, BUT NOT IN AUGUST, AS PLANNED ORIGINALLY.

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